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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NUCLEAR POLLUTION IN THE GULF, IRAQ
SECURITY INITIATIVE, GAZA BEACH SHELLING, AND MARINE SONG

1. SUMMARY: Government-owned daily "Oman" worries about nuclear pollution in the Gulf and supports Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki's reconciliation initiative. "Al-Watan" is skeptical about prospects for an international investigation into the alleged Israeli shelling of a Gaza beach. Online discussion expresses outrage at the posting of a Marine's song. END SUMMARY.

COVERAGE

1. Continuing Iran coverage this week largely faded from the front pages, but did feature Saudi support for Tehran's "right" to use nuclear energy along with news of the most recent incentives offered to Iran to end its uranium enrichment. On June 14, front pages in Arabic papers, and of the English-language "Oman Tribune," carried graphic images of a dead Palestinian boy with a massive head wound, incurred by alleged Israeli shelling in Gaza that was termed a "massacre."

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BLOCK QUOTES: CONCERNS ABOUT NUCLEAR POLLUTION
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2. On June 13, an editorial in government-owned daily "Oman" (circ. 38,000) called possible nuclear pollution in the Gulf "An Extremely Important Matter":

"The possibility of nuclear pollution in the Gulf is an extremely important issue. There are foreign forces in the Gulf that do not care about it - including one that used depleted uranium in the region. Will countries need to spend 15 years trying to get rid of the effects of nuclear pollution?"

GUARDED RESPONSE TO MALIKI'S RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE

3. On June 16, "Oman" carried an editorial under the headline "Iraq and the Missing Peace":

"The American president has indicated in recent press statements that ending violence in Iraq is impossible... The situation in Iraq is worsening and getting more complicated every day, irrespective of whether coalition forces, American or British, stay or leave. These days, conflicts between sects and daily killings are what define the political system and dictate political settlements. A national reconciliation might be an exit from the Iraq quagmire, if all Iraqi armed groups respond to Al Maliki's calls for dialogue about the future of Iraq and other Arab countries."

ALLEGED ISRAELI SHELLING OF GAZA BEACH

4. The privately owned Arabic daily "al-Watan" (circ. 42,000), reacted to Kofi Annan's call for an international investigation into the alleged Israeli shelling of civilians at a beach in Gaza in a June 19 editorial, "Shirking Responsibility is an Israeli Habit":

"How many investigation committees were formed to look into Israeli massacres against innocent Palestinians like Kafr Qasim, Der Yassin, Sabra and Shatila, Qana, and the 2002 Jenin massacre? U.S. pressure manages to impede such investigations. The Israelis have always refused international investigations, suggesting that internal Israeli investigations suffice and that their army is not guilty of such crimes."

ONLINE: ANGER AT MARINE SONG

5. "Al-Sablah," Oman's most popular Internet discussion forum, featured outraged response to the appearance on a U.S. site of a

homemade video showing a Marine singing callously about the treatment of Iraqi civilians. Of 800 site visitors who read an initial posting on the subject, nine responded, all blaming the U.S. military and American citizens "for their historical hatred of Muslims and Arabs." Despite a subsequent posting that carried the Pentagon's denunciation of the Marine's actions, Al-Sablah users described the video as symptomatic of "a genocide meant to kill Iraqis...the song shows their clear, evil intent."

GRAPPO